

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANA 03128 110816Z

15

ACTION NEA-10

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R 110730Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6708

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 3128

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MARR, YE, UR

SUBJ: YEMENI MILITARY VISIT TO MOSCOW

1. DURING NOVEMBER 9 MEETING, MINISTER OF STATE AHMAD ABDU SAID INFORMED ME THAT MAJ. ABDULLAH ABDUL AL-ALIM, COMMANDER OF PARATROOP FORCES, WILL BE VISITING THE SOVIET UNION SOME TIME OVER THE NEXT MONTH. SAID SAID THAT THE VISIT WAS IN RESPONSE TO INCREASED SOVIET OPPORTUNINGS OF PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS TO ACCEPT INVITATION TO VISIT SOVIET UNION. SAID STATED THAT PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI HAS NO INTENTION OF MAKING SUCH A VISIT AND WAS HOPING TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY REPLYING TO SOVIETS. SAID CONTINUED THAT IN RECENT WEEKS, HOWEVER, AS A RESULT OF RECENT MINI CRISIS IN SAUDI/YEMENI RELATIONS SOVIET AMBASSADOR INCREASED HIS PRESSURES ON AL-HAMDI TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION STRESSING READINESS OF SOVIETS TO FILL ANY AND ALL YEMENI REQUESTS FOR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

2. SAID STATED THAT AL-HAMDI HAS DECIDED THE BEST WAY TO PUT OFF THE SOVIETS IS TO SEND  
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PAGE 02 SANA 03128 110816Z

ABDUL AL-ALIM WHO IS CLEVER OFFICER ABLE TO TAKE CARE

OF HIMSELF AND WHO IS NO PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE SOVIETS. (SAID MENTIONED THAT ABDUL AL-ALIM HAS PARTICULARLY RESENTED SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S ADVERSE CRITICISM OF PERFORMANCE OF PARACHUTISTS DURING REVOLUTION DAY PARADE ON SEPTEMBER 29.) SAID ASSURED ME THAT VISIT WAS OF NO CONSEQUENCE AND THAT ABDUL AL-ALIM HAS BEEN ORDERED BY PRESIDENT TO LIMIT HIMSELF TO GENERALITIES AND TO "BULL" HIS WAY THROUGH THE VISIT. SAID ALSO STATED THAT PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI HAS TAKEN THIS DECISION BECAUSE HE DOES NOT WISH TO ANTAGONIZE THE SOVIETS WHO "CAN STILL CAUSE US TROUBLE IF THEY SO DECIDE".

3. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, SAID SAID THAT SAUDIS HAVE NOT YET BEEN INFORMED OF THIS VISIT. I URGED THAT THIS BE DONE SOONEST IN ORDER THAT SAUDIS NOT BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE AND OVER-REACT TO WHAT SAID DESCRIBED AS "A NON-EVENT". SAID AGREED THAT THIS WAS GOOD ADVICE AND SAID THAT HE WOULD RECOMMEND TO THE PRESIDENT THAT WORD BE PASSED TO THE SAUDIS IN A FEW DAYS. SAID THOUGHT THAT HE MIGHT PERSONALLY CARRY A MESSAGE TO RIYADH ON HIS UP-COMING TRIP TO THE STATES.

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE BEEN GETTING REPORTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES OF THE INCREASED SOVIET PRESSURES ON THE YEMENIS, PARTICULARLY ON PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI, DURING THE RECENT YEMEN/SAUDI MINI CRISIS. SOVIETS WERE OBVIOUSLY HOPING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT. MEANWHILE, EVERYTHING WE HAVE BEEN HEARING OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS ALSO POINTS TO A YEMENI DESIRE TO SEE A DIMINUTION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THE YEMENI ARMED FORCES BUT AN UNWILLINGNESS TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE SAUDIS MAKE A TANGIBLE COMMITMENT TO TAKE THEIR PLACE. BY SENDING ABDUL AL-ALIM, AL-HAMDI IS APPARENTLY TRYING TO BUY MORE TIME IN ORDER FOR SAUDIS TO COME THROUGH. SAUDIS CAN BE EXPECTED TO PUT PRESSURES ON YEMENIS TO REMOVE THE SOVIETS QUICKLY ONCE THEY AGREE TO AN ARMS PROGRAM FOR YEMEN. NONETHELLESS, SUCH A REMOVAL WILL DOUBTLESS BE CARRIED OUT BY THE YEMENIS IN A CAUTIOUS AND MEASURED FASHION OVER A PERIOD OF TIME SO

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SANA 03128 110816Z

AS TO AVOID AN OPEN CONFRONTATION WITH THE SOVIETS WHO, AS SAID CORRE CTLY POINTS OUT, CAN STILL CAUSE TROUBLE FOR YEMEN THROUGH THEIR FRIENDS IN ADEN. SCOTES

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